

DOE Weekly Field Memo – August 5, 2009

From the Department of Education:

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- Fall 2009 NECAP Updates
- Free & Reduced Price Meal Applications
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- Brain Research and the Implications for School Transformation

From the Department of Education:

H1N1 Flu Preparedness Update

Audience: All

The Vermont Department of Education continues to communicate with the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) on the expected resurgence of the H1N1 flu virus this fall. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are expected to release guidance specific to schools later this week. This information will be shared with school administrators and school nurses by VDH, and passed along by the DOE. **For the latest information on H1N1 and schools, visit flu.gov, or healthvermont.gov.**

Jill Remick, Communications Director for the DOE, will give a brief update to the Vermont Principals Association on H1N1 this evening. Her expected comments can be found at

http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_media.html#vpa.

Contact: Jill Remick at (802) 828-3154 or jill.remick@state.vt.us

Fall 2009 NECAP Updates

Audience: Superintendents, Principals, Curriculum Coordinators, Science Education Coordinators

The administration window for this year's New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) Reading, Writing and Mathematics tests is October 1-23, 2009. Vermont students in grades 3 through 8 and 11, including publicly funded students attending private independent schools, must participate unless a student qualifies for alternate assessment or state approved exemption.

For more information go to: http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_assessment/necap.html#window.

Contact: Michael Hock at (802) 828-3115 or michael.hock@state.vt.us; Mary Ann Minardo at (802) 828-5410 or maryann.minardo@state.vt.us

Free & Reduced Price Meal Applications

Audience: Superintendents, Principals, Approving Officials

The Free & Reduced Price Meal Applications and Approval and Verification Materials are being mailed to supervisory union offices and private schools today. The information will be sent via a CD and should be disseminated to each school within the district as appropriate. All of the applications and approval materials will be posted at

http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_nutrition/school_nutrition/program_info.html.

Contact: Cheryl Barrows, Administrative Assistant, at (802) 828-2447 or cheryl.barrows@state.vt.us

School Quality Standards Waivers

Audience: Superintendents, Principals, School Board Members

The Legislature enacted a new provision this session which allows the Commissioner of Education to act directly on a school district's request for a waiver of School Quality Standards, if the State Board of Education fails to render a decision on the request at its first regularly scheduled meeting after the request is received. This provision is intended to promote flexibility and innovation in schools. The Commissioner of Education is to report to the Legislature, on or before March 1, 2010, concerning the rationales for the decisions on these waiver requests, highlighting the resulting innovations and how information concerning these innovations was made available to other school districts and supervisory unions.

Contact: General Counsel Mark Oettinger at (802) 828-0416 or mark.oettinger@state.vt.us

ARRA State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF): FY 2010 ARRA Allocation Estimates

Audience: Superintendents, Principals, Business Managers

The application submitted by the State of Vermont for its share of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) has been accepted. Vermont has been awarded \$77,150,071 to allocate to school districts over fiscal years 2010 and 2011, with half being available each year. A link to Vermont's approved application is now available at http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/recovery_act.html#estimates.

Contact: Rae Ann Knopf, (802) 828-0555 or rae.knopf@state.vt.us.

From the Division of Fire Safety:

Reminder About Arson Outside a School Building

Audience: Principals and Facility Directors

In light of the recent fire at Rice Memorial High School, it is a good time to think about potential problems with arson fires that are started outside the school building. Combustible waste and rubbish is a common fire problem as a material easily ignited and contributes to the spread of a fire, and it provides an easily target for an arson fire. To prevent rubbish fires:

- Place dumpsters and similar rubbish containers at least 10 feet away from a building that is built of combustible construction such as wood. Measure from the roof overhang, porch or whatever is closest to the dumpster.
- Place dumpsters and similar rubbish containers at least 10 feet away from any building opening such as windows or doors for a building that is built of noncombustible construction such as steel or concrete.
- Place permanent barriers to keep a dumpster away from a building so the dumpster is not inadvertently left within 10 feet of the building.
- Remove combustible waste and rubbish from buildings at least once each working day.
- Use metal containers for combustible waste and rubbish, or nonmetallic containers that have been tested and labeled for meeting fire standards.
- Use lids on containers that are greater than 40 gallon capacity.

Sheds or other types of portable structures also need to be at least 10' away from the main portion of the school.

Contact: Robert Howe, Assistant State Fire Marshal; Chief Fire Prevention Officer, at (802) 479-7566 or rhowe@dps.state.vt.us

From the Vermont Higher Education Collaborative:

Brain Research and the Implications for School Transformation

Audience: All

This conference is designed for school teams and individuals who are eager to root their student progress improvement efforts in what current research says about how people learn. During the conference renowned brain researcher and presenter, Dr. Jerntstedt, will provide a conceptual framework for considering how to design learning environments and activities that are compatible with the research on how the brain works. Start your year off with the information you need to make your programs more effective whether for a single student, a class or planning for school change. Location: Missisquoi Valley High School, Swanton; Cost: \$175. For more information and to register visit <http://vthec.org/>.

Weekly Field Memo is Online!

The DOE Weekly Field Memo is archived on the Department of Education Web site at http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/field_memo.html. Field Memos and the corresponding attachments are available for download. For Field Memo information three months or older, or for other questions, please contact Jill Remick, communications director, at (802) 828-3154 or jill.remick@state.vt.us.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For the Department of Education Web site see: <http://education.vermont.gov/>. For upcoming events or professional development opportunities, see the DOE Calendar of Events located at: <http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/calendar.html>.

Main Department Line: (802) 828-3135

NOTE: For comments or questions specific to the messages above, please contact the person listed. DO NOT reply to this message.

This Field Memo is posted weekly by the Department of Education to better organize our e-communications to the field. There may be times when separate messages from the department will still be sent.